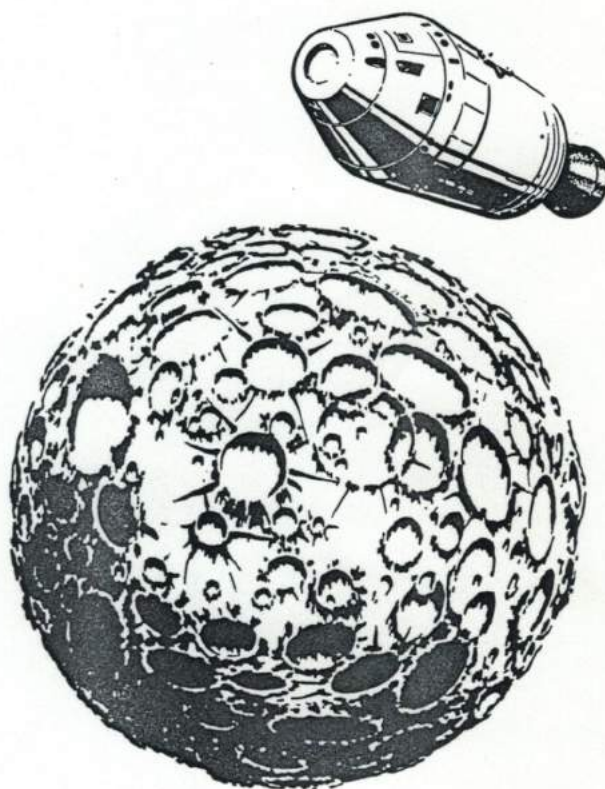


# 20-20 Vision

Targets for Britain's Future

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## Targets for Britain's Future

Edited by Dr Madsen Pirie

Adam Smith Institute

London

1994



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This project was first suggested by Sir Clive Sinclair.

It has drawn upon the work of many people, none of whom necessarily agree with any of the individual targets set out.

Those who helped included Michael Bell, Sir Austin Bide, Dr Eamonn Butler, Mark Call, Nicholas Elliott, Dr Timothy Evans, Professor Antony Flew, Nicolas Gibb, Dr David Gladstone, Dr Richard Howarth, Russell Lewis, Professor David Marsland, Douglas Mason, Aeon McNulty, John McNulty, Professor Patrick Minford, Dr Dennis O'Keeffe, Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, Dr Madsen Pirie, Paul Reynolds, Sir Clive Sinclair, Iain Smedley, Gabriel Stein, Eben Wilson, and Peter Young.

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## INTRODUCTION

This report is not about prediction. Such an activity might be worthwhile, given the great changes which will almost certainly overtake this nation and the world during the time frame considered here. To know the future is, in a sense, to prepare for it. A different approach is attempted here. This work represents determination, rather than prophecy.

The future is not something which rolls onward independent of the actions of human beings. It is something which can be made, in part, by those human beings. Humankind is equipped with the ability to make choices, to give expression to wants and needs. We are also purposive. We can take decisions and actions. We can move toward chosen goals. The future cannot be predicted without predicting what humans will decide to want, to choose, and to do.

This paper sets out a series of targets which the people of Britain might wish to achieve. They point to a date twenty-five years after the end of this one, to the year 2020, and set out some of the targets which we might wish to attain during that quarter of a century. The hundred targets nominated here do not constitute an agenda which the nation is asked to endorse, to work towards, and to spend resources upon. They are presented instead as indicative targets, as a set of goals which people are invited to regard as worthwhile objectives.

Some of the targets suggested might seem to be difficult ones at first sight. When a nation goes through economic recession, as this one has recently, it is often hard to be optimistic. The gloom and depression of straightened circumstances foster a malaise and a mood of self-doubt and uncertainty. The nation questions its own role and goes through a period of soul-searching and self-analysis. People question whether Britain will be able to compete in the modern world, and whether its people will have anything to offer the world.

In pointing to the kind of society and culture that we might wish to become, this report invites people to lift their eyes beyond the recent recession, and to contemplate instead the future we might decide to make happen. If we are to achieve certain goals by the year 2020, we should be thinking about them now. The fundamental question posed by this study asks what kind of society we wish to inhabit in the future. It asks what level of achievement we ought to be capable of. It asks what our standards ought to be. It assumes we can do better.

It would not be a useful exercise to list a range of desirable objectives and then urge society to spend more money on them. There are always people clamouring for more of someone else's money to be spent on their own preferences. For most of the targets suggested here, the assumption has been that unlimited public funds will not be available. On the contrary, ways are indicated in which the private sector might be involved and motivated, and in which private citizens might play their part. Modest tax incentives might give the added stimulus here and there, but for many of the goals a combination of business sponsorship, the stimulus of competition, and the simple desire to achieve more are proposed as the engines of change.

Although the targets selected may seem high, the underlying implication of this study is that they are attainable, and that a combination of commitment, application and effort can achieve them. There would be no point in listing easy targets. The aim is to challenge, to set standards which the people of this country are invited to share, and to work to achieve. It is a challenge to nation's businessmen and scientists, to its inventors and entrepreneurs, and to its ordinary citizens. The final message is that if we want ourselves and our children to live in a better world, we can make it so, and that the future can be all that we wish it to be.



## EDUCATION

1. Early into the next 25 years we should so organize our education system that it is capable of providing nursery education for all children from the age of three. By introducing children to education at an earlier age, we increase the achievements they are subsequently capable of. We have relied upon the home to inculcate many of the skills which children will require. Nursery education will give us the chance to supplement that home teaching.

It is crucial that it should be education, rather than some expensive form of child-minding. While the provision of nursery education will make it easier for mothers to take up at least part time work, the aim is not to free the mother but to educate the child. Qualified teachers will be required in order that structured education can be taught. Some of these might be found among those who have given up teaching in order to raise their own children, or who have retired from the rigours of a full day's teaching. Nursery education will create the opportunity for them to return to teaching for the shorter hours jobs it will provide.

It is also important that steps be taken to encourage the expansion of the supply of nursery school places to meet the new demand. It must be made easier to start and staff new nursery schools, and parents should have access to both private and public sector schools.

The extension of nursery education could be achieved by a voucher scheme. Parents with nursery school age children could receive vouchers equivalent to a large proportion of the cost of a school place. The vouchers could be redeemed at either local authority or private schools. In order to prevent excessive burdens on public finances, the vouchers could be advanced as loans, to be repaid over a ten year period by a tax surcharge.

Because the vouchers would be repaid as a tax surcharge, those who lost earnings through unemployment or disability would not have to make payments they could not afford. There would be incidental gains to the Treasury, in that some single parents dependent on welfare would be able to take at least part-time work instead if their children were at nursery school for part of the day. The proportion of mothers of pre-schoolers who currently work is less than half the European average.

Not all parents would choose to take up these vouchers. Some 53 percent manage to secure nursery school places without them. Many of these might prefer to manage as at present rather than incurring the increased tax liability. What the vouchers will do is to make nursery education with all of its benefits available to all. Germany, where 70 percent of nursery schooling is privately funded, has shown that it can be done with private funding providing most of the resources.

2. The nursery schools could provide real education instead of limiting themselves to play groups. It should be our aim to give all children the opportunity to be literate by the age of five. They should certainly be able to read by that age, and to have mastered the basic elements of writing. Children taught to read when young are more likely to acquire the habits of reading and access to the self education which it brings.

The notion that childhood should only be a play zone is an unwise one. Children can be taught to enjoy learning and to take pride in achievements. Life in the future is going to depend much more on skills, and skills can be augmented by an early start in the basics. If we compare the achievement levels which Japanese children are capable of, compared to their British counterparts, we see that more worthwhile targets can be set and attained.



3. Children have a natural facility for language. Small children exposed to two languages routinely acquire both, and do not confuse the grammar of one with the vocabulary of the other. Children whose parents speak different languages readily acquire both of them. It should be a target to have children exposed to a second language before the age of five, and to acquire some degree of mastery of it.

The intellectual exercise of acquiring another language is a worthy end in itself, quite apart from any subsequent use of the language to gain either employment, or some understanding of the life and culture of another country.

The electronic media will play a large and increasing role in education over the next 25 years. The exposure in childhood to a second language could be achieved by tapes and programmes designed for the purpose. Nothing in education should suggest that it is easy. It may be made enjoyable; it may be rewarding; but it should be challenging. Children will be living in a world in greater contact than ever before. They will have access to foreign language programmes. They will visit foreign countries and encounter foreigners visiting here. Exposing children to a second language quite early in the process of their education will greatly increase their capacity to become fluent in it, and will do much to change the image of the British as the people too incapable or too lazy to learn foreign languages.

4. We should aim to give each child a log book which charts the course of their education. In it would be entered the records of their attainments, and the dates at which they achieved various levels of proficiency. It should contain specimens of their best work, together with endorsements and references acquired at various points.

The child should be allowed to understand that education is an individual thing, a series of hurdles surmounted, of achievements secured. The cub and scout movement has long understood this principle, with its proficiency badges awarded to individuals when they achieve the required standards. Children should be allowed to see education not as something inflicted upon them to be endured, but as a process of self-improvement.

Log books which record the progress and achievements of each individual child would be a useful way for school leavers to present themselves to prospective employers, and to illustrate what they have achieved. It should be our goal to make this the norm of our future educational process.

5. Just as education log books record the progress of each child continually, so there should be a series of regular objective examinations which record each child's progress against the attainment levels of their age group.

Standard targets should be set, which children are expected to attain at ages 7, 10 and 13. They should cover a range of key abilities which test the child's fundamental skills and intellectual development. It should be widely known what children are expected to have achieved by each age level, and the targets themselves should be set high. Neither children nor teachers are motivated by levels too easy to achieve. The Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme would never have captured the interest of youngsters if its targets had been those which anyone could easily attain.

Standard achievement tests at ages 7, 10 and 13 provide good feedback information. They tell parents and teachers what is being done right, and which areas show weaknesses which need special attention. The thinking behind this is that it is a worthwhile goal for future society to make education achievement oriented. Once the child has mastered the achievements, they can use them to develop their own education.

6. We should educate our children to a standard which enables 80 percent of them to pass the lower school examinations at the age of 16. The evidence has long been available that children perform better when more is expected of them. An



education system which cannot educate most of its children up to the acceptable pass standard is a flawed system.

The standard targets set for ages 7, 10 and 13 will help to show strengths and weaknesses, and will indicate where remedial help might be needed on the one hand, and where specialization might be appropriate on the other. The aim should be to have the child taking the right mix of subjects for the lower school examinations, and to be sufficiently proficient to pass.

The old grammar schools gave an excellent education, but it was only for one in seven of the population. We should not regard our education system as adequate unless it can bring four out of five children up to the pass mark in the lower school examinations. This means in practice that schools must monitor the performance of each child against that intended goal. The range of subjects in the 16+ examination must be extended to include some which include technical and practical skills. Part of the skill of future educators will consist in matching up the child with the examination choices.

7. Our target for the higher school examinations which children take at age 18 should be that at least 70 percent of children will be capable of passing them. This is not to be achieved by diluting the quality of the examination, but by raising the quality of the candidates. It means taking a new approach to teaching which is much more achievement-oriented. The aim is to educate the child, and the measure is the ability to use and show that education under test conditions.

Different schools should offer different types of higher school examinations. There should be those which seek peak performance in a small number of subjects, and those which opt instead for a broader base of subjects. There is room for both, and there are children suited to each of them. The International Baccalaureate should be available more widely, and there should be new examinations developed which call for a high degree of technical and practical expertise.

The aim of the higher school examinations is to set a goal for children to achieve. They mark the end of school experience and constitute a target for children and teachers to work towards, and a record of what each child achieved. We should so structure our system of education that it is capable of leading at least seven out of ten children to attain that level.

8. Over the next twenty-five years we should aim to double the proportion of the age group which undergoes tertiary education. This means raising the numbers who can have access to, and can benefit from, university or college education from one in three of the population to two out of three.

During the time of the Conservative governments since 1979 the proportion attending tertiary education has risen from one in seven to one in three. This has been a dramatic and wholly beneficial achievement. We should aim to exceed it. We should, as a nation, offer a sufficiently high standard of education at primary and secondary levels that most children are brought up to a level at which they are capable of undertaking advanced study.

If we can achieve a target which sees 70 percent passing the higher school examinations, we should also make it our aim to ensure that there are tertiary education places for those who wish to fill them. This means we have to encourage a supply of additional places. Some part of this might come from the expansion of existing institutions, but most will probably have to come from new institutions of higher learning.

We have to be much more flexible in allowing new types of institution to be established. We should actively encourage foreign universities and colleges to establish campuses within Britain. We should be prepared to accept and indeed to stimulate the growth of new types of smaller institutions of advanced study, ones



which do not require the same capital intensive effort as our existing bodies. Above all, we must encourage private businesses to commit themselves to the development of new learning institutions.

9. At the heart of these changes lies the philosophical notion that mass state education has to be replaced by a system which allows education to be tailored to the individual abilities and needs of each child. Our aim should be to produce a system which adapts and responds to the individual needs of different children.

Industrial observers have pointed out that information technology means that no two cars coming from today's production lines need be identical. By the time customer preferences for colour, accessories, sun-roofs and equipment are fed into the process, each one could be unique. It would be ironic if we paid so much attention to our cars, but neglected to recognize the differences in our children, or if we applied that information technology to our manufacturing production, but failed to give our children the benefits of it.

The aim should be to have education tailored to the child. At every stage of their education we should be assessing their talents and their needs, and devising courses which fit them. The result might well be that no two children undergo an identical educational experience, or emerge with identical qualifications. This will mean an increase in the numbers and types of courses which are available, and will involve an increase in the application of information technology to teaching.

10. New types of on-the-job training apprenticeships should be available for those who choose to enter the workplace after finishing school. We should pay close attention to the German model, learning from it things which might be applied to the British circumstances.

Fundamentally our nation has failed to give technical training the importance and attention which it merits. Our school system has been geared to academic attainment, to the neglect of the practical skills which are so important to our economic needs. Technical and practical training can be given enhanced status in several ways. Firstly, such subjects should form options in the lower and higher school examinations at 16 and 18. Secondly, training should be available on the job on a routine basis for school-leavers taking up employment.

The crucial need is to raise skill levels, to supplement the learning experience of school with the skilled experience of the work-place. A new type of apprenticeships should be created. One criticism of the old craft apprenticeships was that they were designed as a lengthy process to limit entry into professions and thereby bid up wage levels. The purpose of the new schemes would be to set attainment levels and to provide the training, theoretical and practical, to enable candidates to qualify at those levels.

The key, as with schooling, is qualifications. They should be, like school education, achievement-oriented. Their purpose is to equip candidates with skills whose meaning is apparent to other employers, and whose possession enables people to solve complex technical and practical problems. The new apprenticeships would be structured, with periodic examinations leading to intermediate and final qualifications.

11. Bearing in mind the increasing need for people to move during life between different jobs requiring different skills, it should be a priority to have in place retraining schemes under which mature people can undertake 3, 6, or 12 month courses to acquire new and more up-to-date aptitudes.

Retraining should be a feature of British life, part of the economic background. Employers should be encouraged, and should be given incentives, to fund courses which enable adult workers to acquire new skills and competence. Retraining should be a regular feature of our approach to redundancy and



unemployment. It should be normal, even for workers in regular full-time employment, to take time out for courses which will refresh their skills and bring them up to date with more recent advances.

It is a worthwhile goal to set ourselves the task of integrating adult retraining schemes into our economic and business framework. These schemes should enable mature workers not only to acquire new skills, but to gain the qualifications appropriate to them. There is a great deal not only that business and industry can do, but that the academic institutions can do to provide the resources and the skilled personnel needed for this to be achieved.

## TRANSPORT

1. It should be one of our goals to ensure adequate public transport within our cities. The technology is now available for urban light transit systems to be put in place in most major cities. Some, indeed, have already begun the process. The most promising system appears to be the guided bus running along dedicated lanes. It is fast, clean, safe and comparatively inexpensive. It is less costly than its nearest alternative, the urban tramway.

The guided bus is directed by a small side wheel which feels the "curb" of its guiding lane. Some versions are electric, some flywheel. They use regenerative braking in which power is added back to the system from braking. Some versions allow the vehicle to recharge power at the stops, eliminating the need for power to be transmitted along overhead lines, as with trolley buses, or along rails, as with subway trains.

The wide deployment of such systems can be encouraged by finding creative ways to employ private capital. The use of private finance for guaranteed returns is not acceptable. This is simply public borrowing by any other name. What are needed are schemes which involve risk finance. That is, there must be a way in which private financiers can make profits if successful, and losses if unsuccessful.

There are several ways to achieve this. The simplest ones invite private firms to build and operate and take their chances on usage. More complex schemes involve agreeing a "standard usage" with government authorities, above which profits are made.

Governments, local and national, have an important role to play in using planning powers to secure the routes for such transit systems, and in allocating the designated streets for the purpose. It should be a target to have such systems in place in all major cities within twenty-five years. The savings in congestion and pollution costs will be immense, as will the convenience afforded to those who live and work in cities.

2. Within the next quarter century we should gradually remove from our cities vehicles whose engines burn fossil fuels. The presence of pollution and populations within the same conurbation is not conducive to good living conditions. Electric vehicles will probably constitute the most viable alternatives, and it should be policy to provide incentives for their use.

Tax incentives for clean burning engines constitute the most valid way of securing the change-over. Part of the resistance to the move is the high development of petrol and diesel engines. Once electrics caught on, the same degree of research and development would similarly produce ever more efficient and successful variants. The quality of life in cities will be markedly improved if the



vehicles within them add nothing to the smell, the pollution or the noise of urban traffic.

Those who claim that electric vehicles simply transfer pollution to power stations are missing the point. It is the presence of pollution in the same space as people which causes the local problem. The global problem can be tackled because there are cleaner ways of producing power.

Government might act in two ways. One would gradually increase the differential between fossil fuel engines and clean ones. It should become progressively more attractive to opt for the cleaner versions. Other moves could set increasingly tough emission standards within cities, giving notice to the car industry of what standards will be required five and ten years ahead. Public transport should meanwhile lead the way in discarding the use of fossil fuel engines.

3. The Britain of 2020 should be linked internally by trains which travel at over 200 mph. All major cities should be connected by high speed arterial routes which enable people to travel rapidly between them. Not only will this relieve pressure on roads, it will relieve the pressure on green belts caused by the need for houses. High speed transit means people can live further away, taking away part of the demand which causes urban sprawl.

These high speed networks should be financed overwhelmingly by private capital. Government has to take the lead in instigating schemes which private capital will find attractive. It can help with planning consents, although the vast majority will be achieved by using existing track routes and upgrading them.

Private firms which supply the capital to develop these high speed links should be allowed to take part of their return by way of the enhanced land values which the new services will bring about. Developers should be encouraged to put together complex packages in which the return on investment comes from a variety of sources, part of which will be from rents on the upgraded track, part from the higher fares on the services that are run, and part from the added development value of land linked in this way.

4. Britain should aim to have all of its major airports linked to urban centres by dedicated people-movers. The prospect of travellers facing delays and traffic jams as they struggle to and from the airport is not one calculated to appeal to our self image as a modern and successful nation.

A start has already been made. The maglev monorail linking Birmingham airport and station is a good example. The new fast service between Heathrow and Paddington might qualify. The express services between Victoria and Gatwick have the advantage of going right into the airport, which is a crucial factor. We should take steps to encourage private capital to propose and initiate dedicated links at all major airports.

This will help to deal with an increasing demand for air transport, and will make Britain an attractive destination for passengers from overseas. With high speed rail and air links to other European destinations, Britain could become the most attractive initial stop for visitors from outside Europe.

5. We should encourage the development of quiet aircraft. This will relieve the burden on those who live on the flight paths of air services, and enable more flights to be made. Aircraft engines are already quieter than they used to be, and further advances could easily be encouraged. Internal sound dampeners and the use of anti-noise technology could achieve much greater suppression of aircraft noise pollution.



The development of quiet engines will remove the need for the noise limiting manoeuvres now required at many airports in order to limit excess noise. These manoeuvres are often costly on fuel, and do not contribute to the safety of air flight. Our engine manufacturers should be encouraged to develop the technology for quiet engines, and we should declare our intention to impose further limits on aircraft noise which only quieter engines can circumvent.

6. We should make it one of our goals to introduce clean and efficient suburban commuter systems. The only way to lure drivers out of private cars is to make the public transport alternatives more attractive. There are several ways to do this, many of which could be encouraged by a clear commitment to the goal.

In many cases the train commuter services are under-capitalized. The track has not been sufficiently maintained and upgraded, and the rolling stock is antiquated. Privatization should do much to improve and upgrade commuter train services, but help will be needed in the shape of schemes designed to attract private capital.

The new private operating companies should be given franchise contracts which encourage new technology and make it easier to reap the benefits of new capital inputs. They should also encourage the introduction of new technology and service innovations.

Government should announce its wish to see clean, efficient and fast suburban commuter services, and invite the private sector to come up with alternative ways of achieving that goal in different cities. The gain in reduced pollution and congestion costs could be a huge one.

7. It should be one of our goals to have efficient road pricing in place for our cities, particularly in respect of the commuter rush hours.

In the case of roads leading into cities, road pricing is a means of regulating traffic. One of the prime aims is to restrict rush hour traffic to that which is essential. By flexible pricing, non-essential traffic can be shifted to less expensive times. Modern road pricing technology does not require toll gates or complex and expensive capital works. Electronically read cards in car windscreens can suffice to monitor, record and charge. In other versions pre-paid cards can be used.

Road pricing not only keeps rush hours for essential traffic, it also encourages efficient vehicle use. Car sharing and car pooling become much more attractive if there is a road price to be paid per vehicle per journey. The plain fact is that the roads leading into our cities are vastly over congested at both morning and evening peaks. It should be one of our priorities to use road pricing to minimize that congestion.

8. The responsibility for the operation and maintenance of our motorways should be put into private hands. Electronic road pricing provides a means by which this can be achieved. Once people pay for the use of motorways, even though the charge on each journey might be small, there is an income stream generated. That income stream gives the motorway an asset value and means it can be sold.

Private operators can be invited to take over the motorways and assume the responsibility for their operation, maintenance and repair. Since their own income will be affected, they will effect repair and maintenance as rapidly and efficiently as possible. They will act to maximize the use, and hence the revenue, to which the motorway can be put. All of this means less tax burden in maintenance, gains to the public purse from asset sales, and more efficient use made of the motorways.

Private firms should increasingly be invited to suggest by-passes, extensions and improvements which can be financed by private capital and repaid from electronic toll revenues. Our target should be to put most of our motorways under



the regimen of private ownership with electronic pricing over the course of the next twenty-five years.

9. The privatization of London's Underground should be undertaken with a view to securing its complete modernization over the next quarter century. The private firms which take over the system should give clear undertakings to upgrade the technology to provide a fast, safe and clean service. The most promising technology might well be maglev, the magnetic levitation which is the basis for Birmingham airport's monorail link.

Once the capital investment has been put in, the shortage of moving parts gives very low replacement costs indeed, and very low manpower requirement. Safety is similarly well served by maglev systems. Although it might seem more expensive to supply magnetic lift as well as propulsion, the requirement is only one kilowatt per ton of vehicle, and the cost of this is far exceeded by the gains which lack of friction generates. The system is relatively silent, non polluting, rapid and safe. One of our goals should be to have our capital city, and perhaps others, equipped with similar systems.

10. There are many tunnels under London, and even Underground stations, obsolete for existing use. It should be one of our priorities to investigate how many of these tunnels could be restored and extended for use as urban tollways. They would offer motorists the opportunity to cross under London at various points, paying a toll to miss some of the surface congestion.

The Limehouse Link has shown what tunnels can achieve in terms of congestion saving. Part of the problem is that they are very expensive to build. Given the existence of obsolete and unused tunnels already under London, we ought to investigate how many of them might be suitable for conversion to urban tollways.

One of the central problems with tunnels has always been the need for ventilation, given the pollution of petrol or diesel engines. If these were phased out of central London within the next quarter century, any tunnels restored as tollways would need rather less ventilation facilities than they might otherwise require.

11. The danger, pollution and noise imposed upon pedestrians and cyclists is one of the less attractive features of our cities. It should be a target for Britain's future to achieve separation wherever possible between powered vehicles and pedestrian and cycle traffic.

In practice this will mean the systematic allocation of streets to non-vehicular traffic. Some cities have made notable progress in this respect, with spectacular results in terms of quality of urban life. One of our goals should be to extend this principle of separation as widely as possible, separating the two types of traffic and the inconvenience they cause to each other.

In order to achieve this target of maximum separation, it will be necessary for streets and lanes to be designated in advance for one type of traffic or the other, and for systematic moves to be made to divide the two. In practical terms it will be the spread of urban public transport such as guided bus routes which will enable streets to be reserved for pedestrian and cycle use, and for others to be allocated to powered vehicles.

The important step is to set out an advance conception of how the separated system will function once it has been taken through its various stages.

12. We should decide to make more effective use of our city streets by the systematic removal of on-street parking from many of the key through routes. Much of the congestion is caused because lines of parked vehicles on one or both sides of the road use up space which could double the capacity of the street.



If the space were costed in terms of the price per square foot it could bring for commercial or residential development, the true cost of on-street parking can be calculated. It uses valuable space and constricts traffic flows.

The only viable way to reduce on-street parking is to provide alternative facilities. In London we should examine the unused underground stations and investigate other possibilities for extending underground car parking. In other cities, as well as in London, we should investigate ways in which off-street parking can be provided either under or over ground.

The old policy has been to restrict off-street parking in the hope of restricting traffic. The new policy should be to use road pricing to control traffic, and off-street parking to reduce the propensity of parked vehicles to constrict flows of the traffic which does come into cities.

13. We should invite the private sector to bring forward proposals which make much more effective use of our rivers and canals. They constitute highways, vastly under-used, which flow along strategic routes. It is instructive to stand over Thames bridges in a morning and compare the traffic density to that which can be seen by standing over motorway bridges.

The same can be said of several of our leading cities. Rivers and canals represent a resource which intelligent and innovative proposals could put to more effective use. One possibility is that monorails might be constructed along the side of some of them, hanging over the water to avoid encroaching on valuable land space.

We should set as one of our goals within the next twenty-five years the development of imaginative proposals which can exploit the space and the opportunity for new transit systems which many of our rivers and canals present.

14. The provision of company cars should be examined very carefully indeed over the next two decades. There is a strong case for supposing that the practice imposes major social costs for very few gains. Drivers who receive company cars are paying less than full cost for their motoring, and this often makes public transport seem more expensive to them when in fact it is cheaper. Some estimates have it that one quarter of all rush hour traffic consists of company cars.

Our aim should be to encourage rational choices, not to perpetuate a system which subsidizes some at the expense of others. Although company cars are pretty well engrained into our corporate culture, there is a strong case for weaning people off the habit and moving over to straight cash rewards in their place. The company car should not continue to be a cheaper way of rewarding executives.

## CRIME, LAW AND ORDER

1. Since a large proportion of crimes are those involving theft of cars or from cars, we should make it one of our objectives to make such crimes virtually impossible to commit. The use of electronic vehicle trackers has already led to the recovery of stolen cars and trucks and the detection and punishment of the offenders. A small device built into the vehicle can be activated by a remote signal if the vehicle is stolen, enabling its location to be known.

We should co-operate with insurance companies and manufacturers to ensure that such devices become standard. The insurance rates should be lower on such vehicles since it is very difficult to steal them successfully. The problem has been that the costs of such crime fall upon society generally in terms of police time and



costs, whereas insurance lightens the burden on the individual motorist. Cars and lorries without electronic trackers should cost much more to insure.

The same principle should be extended to the dead-bolts which make car theft or theft from cars very difficult to achieve. It can be further extended to cover armoured glass which is difficult to break into. The evidence is that most auto crime is opportunistic, and only takes place because it is easy to commit and to get away with.

We should target the virtually elimination of auto crime early into the next quarter century by the use and promotion of technical devices to make it very much more difficult to commit successfully.

2. Research should be promoted leading to the development of miniaturized devices which enable valuable consumer goods to be electronically "tagged." This will probably be achieved by micro-miniature transponders or similar technology built into the chassis of high cost items, enabling them to be tracked electronically if they are stolen.

This will make theft and burglary harder to get away with. We should use differential insurance costs to promote the spread of the practice, bearing in mind the great reduction in police time which it could achieve.

It should be one of our goals that we use technological advances to fight crime, and encourage research and development leading to that end.

3. It should also be one of our aims to systematically redesign our housing estates, our street architecture and our stores to make opportunistic crime much less likely to occur.

Research has indicated for some time what features of design are particularly crime-prone. In the case of housing estates it is ease of entry and exit, ease of internal access, lack of responsibility for common areas, and design which creates out-of-sight areas where criminals can work or shelter. The redesign of estates can be very cost effective. Closing off internal walk-ways, for example, or breaking common areas into private gardens, can bring dramatic drops in crime rates at comparatively low cost.

In the case of street architecture it is poor lighting and recessed doorways and passages which exacerbate crime problems. The redesign to eliminate such features can be of low cost, and can often be borne by businesses and residents and saved in lower insurance premiums, as well as in the savings caused by a reduction in crime levels.

Similarly with stores, it is the design of their display and sales points which can contribute to crime levels. While it may not be possible to eliminate crime, it is possible by this intelligent type of redesign to curb its incidence by making it hard to commit successfully. The modest costs can be recouped through insurance reductions, and by saving the costs imposed by the crime itself. We should decide to maximize our use of designs which minimize crime opportunities.

4. The administration of justice has become so laborious and bureaucratized that the clear link between crime and punishment is being lost. It should be our goal to speed up the administration and execution of justice. Our goal should be to bring the vast majority of those accused to trial within one month of their apprehension.

In practice this will mean speeding up and streamlining several stages of the process. It means less paperwork, more computerization, and intelligent use of new processes. The clock should start ticking the moment an accused is apprehended and charged. Target dates should be assigned for the final assembly of evidence for



presentation, for the preparation of witnesses for court hearing, and for the completion of the prosecution case.

While special circumstances might merit a delay of trial, the norm should be for one to take place while memories are still fresh in the mind. That this will mean bringing the administration of justice into the twenty-first century will be an incidental gain.

5. Early into the next twenty-five years society should determine to protect itself from repeat offenders. The statistics show that a very large proportion of crimes are committed by persistent repeat offenders, most of whom are known to the police.

The first measure should be to permit a court to hear evidence of previous convictions before reaching a verdict. The second is that the laws which protect young persons accused should not apply in the case of repeat offenders. The third is that courts should be able to order persistent offenders to be electronically "tagged" in such a way that their movements can be continuously recorded and logged on computer. In the event of crimes being committed of which they are suspected, the electronic record will show if they were indeed at the scene of the crime at the time in question.

Using these and other techniques, society should make it one of its goals to protect itself from multiple offenders. The result could be a substantial drop in the crime rate and the degree to which people feel themselves to be vulnerable to it.

6. In view of the number of crimes committed by persistent young offenders who abscond from institutions to commit local crime waves, the nation should decide to establish detention centres for the worst offenders from which escape is much more difficult.

Institutions on island locations make it much more difficult for residents to break out and wreak havoc on the local communities. There are many islands off Britain, some of which already have disused former army camps or derelict monasteries which might be converted. At some time in the next twenty-five years we should perhaps think in terms of establishing at least one island detention centre for the most persistent young multiple offenders.

7. Within the next few years we should give high priority to protecting ourselves from crime. It should be a goal to increase the number of law enforcement officers available in public high risk places. A way of achieving this would be by the creation of a new force of police auxiliaries. They would be trained for a limited number of duties, and their main role would be to assert a police presence on railway trains, on underground trains, and on neighbourhood patrols.

People made redundant at age 50 who face reduced prospects of securing another job might provide some of the recruits for such a force. The police auxiliaries would be in uniform, and equipped with modern communication equipment, including radio and video links. Their presence would be a major deterrent to criminal activity, as well as a reassurance to members of the public.

8. Society should decide to make its villages and housing estates less prone to criminal activity by hiring private firms to patrol and protect them. This is already happening on a spasmodic basis; it should be made systematic.

The regular police force should provide training for the personnel of such firms, and should make available background checks on applicants for jobs with them. The security officers of private firms should be given limited powers of arrest and detention. Police have little to fear from the growth of such firms and their activities. They free expert police time for more important front line work, and in many cases they provide job opportunities for retired police officers.



9. An increasing number of cases features the detection of suspects because of the presence of security cameras at the scene of the crime. Last year alone saw several arrests aided because the suspects were caught on video cameras. The lesson should be that the presence of video cameras will firstly enable more crimes to be solved, and secondly will deter crimes from being committed under their scrutiny.

We should decide to extend security cameras to cover all high risk areas, using advanced night vision technology where necessary. The aim should be to stand a very high chance of recording some features of any crime committed there. It should be a priority to cover as much of our cities, towns and villages as can be achieved. We should encourage the development of low cost, reliable and low maintenance systems.

The systems should be able to record weeks at a time, records which will never be accessed unless a crime is reported. The use of image enhancers and digital composition will enable the likenesses of suspects to be widely publicized. The goal should be to have systems like this in such widespread use that crime is substantially deterred by their presence.

10. One target for the next twenty-five years should be the gradual transfer of all responsibility for motoring offences to traffic wardens. In addition to their duties related to the control of parking, new types of traffic warden should patrol streets and motorways to control traffic offences such as speeding.

Too much police time is spent dealing with motoring offences, nearly all of which could be handled by people with more specific and narrow training. The police force proper would be free to spend its time on the prevention of crime and the apprehension of criminals.

One effect of this change would be a reduction in the antagonism sometimes felt for the police by ordinary citizens in their guise as motorists.

## HOUSING

1. Over the next quarter of a century we should make it a national target to renovate all of our housing stock. The older houses in particular should be subject to special attention. The need is to upgrade housing so that it conforms to the levels we would like to see for the first half of the next century.

This will involve a thorough campaign to inspect and evaluate every house, with a view to seeing what might be required to improve it up to modern standards. It might be plumbing, sanitation, kitchen, room size or damp proofing. The first aim is to find out what is required for each house.

The second stage is to encourage the performance of the necessary work. This might involve tax allowances or in some cases the creation of mutual self help groups which will work as teams to improve all of the homes belonging to members of the group. The target should be to complete the complete upgrade of 100 percent of the housing stock by the year 2020.

2. In view of the large amounts of energy expended in keeping British homes warm in winter, it should be a priority to gradually make all of our homes energy sufficient. Through the use of insulation and heat storage technology we should be able to make virtually all of the housing stock self-sufficient in energy.

The building industry should be invited to devise ways of achieving this target, and the universities should be asked to produce low cost energy packs



designed to make each home self sufficient. New forms of super-efficient solar power might be developed to enable each house to collect most of the energy it will need, and new forms of long term storage might be produced which will enable surplus summer heat to be stored for use in the subsequent winter.

The challenge is not to apply existing technology, but to develop new technologies in the light of the declared goal.

3. We should seek to improve living standards by increasing the space per person provided in each home. Architects and designers should be challenged to produce ingenious designs that maximize the use of ground space to provide the maximum living space.

One of the most successful government housing schemes was that which provided matching grants for the upgrading of bathrooms and inside lavatories. Thanks in part to this scheme the nation's housing stock was upgraded in respect of plumbing and toilet facilities. A similar scheme could be used to upgrade in terms of living space. A less costly alternative to matching grants might be the use of tax allowances for approved work in this respect.

Government can take a lead by providing an accelerated and easy passage through the planning process for improvement schemes designed to expand the living space available within existing homes.

4. Bearing in mind that noise nuisance is the most frequently cited cause of unhappiness with living conditions, we should make a point of seeking to have all homes noise insulated by the end of twenty-five years. This will involve the development of new, cheap materials to restrict sound transmission, and in some cases perhaps even the use of anti-noise technology to control the problem.

Police and local authorities should also be equipped with new powers to curb noise nuisance based on on-the-spot readings from simple noise meters. The technology is less difficult than that which is used every day in breathalyser tests on motorists. Against those whose noise nuisance is deliberate and constant despite official action to restrain them, there should be new powers enabling them to be moved.

5. Britain is steadily accumulating surplus agricultural land as more food per acre is produced. New model villages should be built on surplus agricultural land in order to relieve the constant pressure to build up existing villages and to extend suburbs.

The prime objection to rural building is from those who feel that their view or their amenity will be impaired by having new houses nearby. In many cases there is agricultural land surplus to requirements on which whole villages, even small towns, could be built which do not impede anyone else's view or amenities.

There is a strong case, not for declaring marginal land in Scotland or Wales surplus to requirements, but for designating prime land much closer to the areas of Britain where more housing is needed. Well designed and constructed villages could enhance the local environment in a way that Canadian style prairies currently fail to do.

6. Many areas of housing are simply collections of people who do not know their neighbours and have no relationships with them. While this should, of course, be a matter of personal choice, there are design features which can assist the formation of genuine neighbourhood communities.

We should give some emphasis to neighbourhood design, examining the features which can lead to the formation of communities within an area. This involves research in the first instance, and some redesign of existing areas and



estates in order to incorporate some of the recommendations. These might include closing off some streets, providing central squares or greens, or designating central facilities.

It should be a target to attempt during the next quarter century to halt the trend toward atomized living by providing some of the architectural features which encourage the formation of neighbourhood communities for those who wish to do so.

7. We should endeavour to have all homes in Britain linked on an "electronic highway" within the next two and a half decades. This means that all would have access to telephone, cable, fibre optic and computer links.

The aim should be to bring the full range of such services, and ones which have yet to be developed from them, within the ambit of every home in Britain. New homes should routinely feature such facilities, and there should be a gradual campaign to link existing homes on such a network.

This will ensure that there is wide access to facilities including the ability to shop and work from home, to have admission to a wide and varied range of entertainment facilities, to have the option of electronic security systems connected to central monitoring facilities, to access educational and medical services offered by remote video links, and all that the "electronic highway" promises to make possible. We should determine now that Britain can become one of the leaders in this technology and its exploitation.

## THE ECONOMY

1. We should manage our handling of inflation so that we achieve long-term price stability. Our target for inflation should be to conquer it, so that people can make long term plans with the assurance that money will hold its value.

We have long since abandoned the notion that a little inflation is good for the economy and for employment. Inflation is disastrous for investment, and therefore for employment. Any brief temporary gain, which is less high and is more brief each time it is used, is outweighed by the economic dislocation which it engenders, and by the unemployment which is part of its withdrawal symptoms.

2. We should aim to achieve a growth rate which results in a doubling of the standard of living every 20 years. This is very high by the standards of the Twentieth Century, but it was a century which taught us many mistakes to avoid.

The principal engines of growth are a healthy small business sector and attractive conditions for investment. There are no consumer-led recoveries, only investment-led recoveries. By the year 2020 we should make it an aim of government to sustain a growth rate sufficiently high during long recovery cycles that it more than compensates for the recession during short down-turns.

In many ways this sets a target not for things government must do, but for things it must not do. Sound money is needed, and a business sector as free as possible from the government interference which hampers its ability to generate jobs and wealth.

3. For the second half of the Twentieth Century Britain was a net exporter of ideas. This is no bad thing, and creates invisible earnings. Too often, however, the major exploitation of British ideas was achieved with technologies developed abroad.



Our target for 2020 is that Britain should develop and license technology to such an extent that we become a net importer of ideas, developing in this country the technology which can bring the real gain from inventions. This can be encouraged by the establishment of huge data bases with details of scientific and technical work overseas, and which can be accessed by British companies seeking innovative products and processes.

4. Britain should aim to achieve historic highs in investment and saving during the first two decades of the next century. This is not to be gained by exhorting people to save, or even by punishing them for spending. It can only be done by the creation of sufficiently attractive conditions for investment to be a rational choice.

Part of those conditions are determined by tax structure, and one of our aims should be a tax system friendly to investors, and one which rewards them for taking the risks which investment entails. Part is accomplished by low inflation rates. Both of these are within the realm of factors influenced by government policy.

5. Our targets for taxation in twenty-five years' time should be for a top rate of income tax at 20 percent, and a basic rate at 10 percent. These are maximum rates. It is worth remembering that in the nine years from 1979 to 1988 the top rate of income tax was brought down from 98 percent to a top rate of 40 percent. The basic rate was also reduced substantially over the same period.

Lower rates often bring more revenue if the reduction is calculated and timed correctly. Lower rates mean that it is less worthwhile avoiding tax by means of complex schemes, and less worthwhile evading tax by criminal deceit. They also mean that marginal incentives go up because people get to keep a higher percentage of each pound earned. A reduction of the top rate from 40 percent to 20 percent would mean a rise in marginal value from the 60 pence people keep now out of each extra pound to 80 pence. This is an increase of one-third in the value of extra work.

6. The target for government spending by 2020 is that it should not exceed 20 percent of GDP. This will be hard to achieve because government spending is notoriously "sticky" downwards. It rises much more easily than it falls.

Nonetheless, two successful techniques were discovered in the 1980s. One was that spending can be successfully cut if the whole activity concerned is transferred into the private sector so that government no longer has to fund it. The implication is that there must be much more privatization to come.

The second way was to hold public spending and allow the private sector to grow faster, thus reducing the percentage if not the amount of public expenditure. This implies tight controls on government combined with a loose rein on private expansion. This is the combination which can achieve successful and stable growth. It constitutes a worthy target.

7. Long before 2020 one of our targets should be to abolish Capital Gains Tax and Inheritance Tax. Both of these militate against the formation and investment of capital pools. We should set in motion a procedure which will rapidly reduce both of them to zero.

Both taxes are hangovers from the days when success was taxed not because it raised significant revenue, but out of envy. We have learned by now that success has benefits for all of us. It is the source of the national wealth and the new employment which the country is going to need. We should create conditions under which people will build up businesses and sell them to create new ones; in which people will build up wealth in order to pass on to their children.

8. Another target to be sought well before the year 2020 is that of a fully private and independent Bank of England. The Bank was private for the first 250 of its 300



years, and made a much better job of keeping the currency stable than it has done under state ownership.

A privatized Bank would be under contract to Government to deliver an inflation rate within a low target band, just as New Zealand's Bank is. The private, independent status would place the Bank much further beyond the reach of politicians seeking to manipulate the currency in order to produce the appearance of boom conditions before an election.

9. One innovation which we should seek within the next twenty-five years is the creation of a special "creative individual" category with tax advantages. The Republic of Ireland has had just such a policy for many years, and has managed to attract creative writers from abroad, as well as retaining many of its own at home.

Although the state takes less tax from their incomes, it attracts them and their investment and spending within its economy, reaping the benefits of their presence less directly. We should make it a goal to introduce similar status in Britain, and to make the category broad enough to include more than writers. This, combined with low tax rates in general, could reverse the brain drain and bring talented people flooding into our shores. As well as the economic advantages, this would do much to help our self-image as a nation.

10. Our target should be free trade in food, goods and money. The second of these is broadly compatible with the professed aims of the European Union, if not yet with its practices. We should build upon that commitment by our partners, seeking to make the single market into a genuine free trade area.

Britain should aim to extend that internationally by encouraging our European partners to negotiate bilateral trade reductions with countries outside the union, including the North American Free Trade Area.

Free trade in food and money is not yet European policy, so Britain should take the lead in attempting to make it so. Our self-exclusion from European Monetary Union will enable us to introduce competing currencies within the UK, and to press their advantages onto our partners. On food we must renew our efforts to bring sanity to the Common Agricultural Policy, making it our aim to have it swept away by the early years of the next century.

11. In view of the importance to our national life of the informal sector, the so-called "black" economy, we should determine to legitimize it. One way would be to institute an amnesty for all undeclared business activity which came forward to be registered as part of a new category.

That new category would correspond to Italy's "small artisan" sector, and would consist of small businesses which would be largely exempt from the taxes and regulations intended for larger firms. It would be the economic equivalent of a greenhouse, a sheltered part of the economy in which fledgling businesses could grow. It would operate like a portable enterprise zone, but applying the exemptions to an economic category instead of to a geographical area.

The effect would be an increase in economic activity, and a viable alternative to illegal employment in which some people indulge while claiming various state benefits.

12. It should be a national aim to increase the proportion of our GNP which derives from the rents received on intellectual properties. That is, we should aim to make British intellectual property such that other countries will pay royalties for the use of it. This can include a wide variety of categories from music videos to software, from computer games to patents. Our aim should be to create conditions within Britain conducive to the development and export of intellectual goods.



Part of the rationale is that the economic movement of Britain has been away from jobs in manufacturing, and toward jobs in services. Although some critics deride service jobs as "hamburger flipping," the reality is that a high proportion have been in the advanced "knowledge" sector. We should create the right environment for this to develop further, providing a friendly tax and regulatory environment to encourage it.

13. To counter the increasing remoteness of companies from the general public, now that institutions are the major shareholders of large corporations, we should aim to recapture some of the participation in small local companies which took place in the heyday of Victorian capitalism.

We should introduce measures which make it easy for shares in small local companies to be traded in share shops. The aim would be to have members of the local community investing in local businesses by buying shares in them. The service would have to be a simple, over-the-counter operation. The local newspapers would carry stories and news about the performance of local businesses, and about the start-up of new ones. Local residents would then be able to buy shares if they wished from High Street share shops.

14. We should determine that early into the new century banking reforms will be introduced which encourage banks to enter long term relationships with small local companies by taking equity stakes in them as part of a package of financial support.

The norm in Britain has been for banks to make loans at interest to small firms. When economic downturns come or when interest rates rise, the banks restrict credit and try to call in their loans. The result is the forced closure of thousands of small businesses which might be viable and profitable if given time and help to restructure.

Banking reform should aim at fostering a new relationship in which the bank is a long-term partner and part owner of the business, and in which the return for its financial support is in part an equity stake such that the bank has a direct interest in seeing its value rise. If this aim is achieved the result will be beneficial to businesses, beneficial to banks, and beneficial to Britain.

## HEALTH

1. We should aim to have access to Health Maintenance Organizations for the entire population by 2020. HMOs provide total managed health care in return for the subscription paid to them, which may come from private or public sources. Many US corporations have gone over to HMOs as a means of providing full health cover in ways which allow them some degree of control over costs. The alternative is open ended budgeting which allows the medical profession to perform what they wish and recover the funding from insurance. This is notorious for its escalating costs.

Britain is poised to move toward managed health care. The internal market reforms of the late 1980s started the process. Small changes are needed to complete it. Our targets should be to remove restraints on budget-holding GPs, allowing them to purchase full health cover for their patients. We should similarly allow District Health Authorities to become private Local Provident Trusts, as a competing source of the same HMO cover.

The result will be to give every patient a choice between HMOs, with the assurance of public funding for health needs and the advantage of competition between producers of health care services.



2. We should target an average life expectancy of roughly 100 years by 2020. Not only are we on the verge of conquering more diseases, but we are learning about the lifestyle changes which can prolong not only life expectancy, but the length of an active and useful life-span.

The advent of gene therapy might well involve the elimination of some of the traditional killers, and even holds out the option of making longevity genes more widely available. Just as antibiotics produced a quantum jump in life expectancy by reducing traditional causes of death, so modern medicine seems to be at a similar threshold. We should make our target five score years instead of the old three score and ten.

3. Our aim should be to bring infant mortality to as near zero as we can. Many of the defects which kill infants can be detected and corrected in the womb; others can be corrected in infancy. We should aim at a screening process which determines the problems which the unborn child is likely to face, and at providing the treatments to minimize the effects of them.

Once again, gene therapy holds the key to providing treatment for many of the conditions which inflict short lives of suffering upon many children today. Our target should be to develop processes and treatments which take the death rate among infants as close to zero as we can manage.

4. By 2020 our goal should be to have eliminated most of the major diseases which affect people in Britain. Ironically it is the onset of AIDS and the research which this has instigated into the immune system and its functioning which brings the possibility within our grasp.

The target of our medical research should be to track down and provide valid treatments for most of the major diseases. In many cases this will involve the creation of computer designed drugs specifically created to attack particular ailments. Specific molecules will be constructed to home in on hostile elements.

The aim should be to have developed specific remedies to most of the major diseases which currently afflict our citizens.

5. We should aim by 2020 to have discovered new chemical entities or to have genetically engineered compounds which can treat the three major classes of ailment which still lack effective remedies. These are dementia, many cancers, and some viral infections including AIDS.

We can encourage this by promoting a climate conducive to the research, testing and marketing of new medical discoveries. The factors which affect this are within the ambit of government. They concern the degree of regulation which covers the testing of new products. They include the lifespan of the patent, and whether this dates from the registration of it or from the government clearance of it. They cover the price regime for new drugs and the degree to which the pioneering company can recover its research and development costs and still hope for a profit commensurate with its risks.

It should be our aim to create a climate favourable to research and development by tackling all three of these areas, making Britain a favoured place for the kind of innovation and commitment which will be needed to make breakthroughs in the medical fields listed. Successful drug treatment for dementia, cancers and major viral infections will prove very cost effective indeed, since hospital treatment is far more expensive and constitutes a huge use of NHS resources on the conditions concerned.

6. It should be possible within the next quarter of a century to produce a fully functional replacement heart. There is a critical shortage of donors now for most major organs. In the short term the solution probably lies with mechanical



alternatives. At the very least they can be used to prolong the life of a patient until a suitable donor emerges. At best they might provide adequate permanent substitutes.

We should aim to achieve a reliable and effective artificial heart by 2020, and invite businesses to sponsor several promising research projects which might lead to a successful outcome.

7. By 2020 we should aim to have transformed our health service to such an extent that most treatments currently performed in hospital can be performed instead at the GP's surgery. Instead of patients having to wait for treatment in distant hospitals, they will be able to have operations at their local general practitioner's.

This will mean allowing GPs to upgrade their facilities. They will have to be allowed to attract private investment to add new wings to their surgeries and to purchase new equipment. It will mean bringing consultants into the practice to see the patient, instead of sending the patient away to see the consultant. It will mean adding skilled and highly trained staff to the roster at the local practice.

All of these will result from re-orienting NHS resources toward GP budget-holders. It will represent more efficient use of NHS funds, in that short stay or day care treatment is less costly than lengthy stays in hospital. There will probably be a clinical gain, too, in that most patients would fare better in the vicinity and the company of their families than they would in strange and distant institutions.

8. As a means of supporting this type of shift we should aim to develop full mobile hospital operating theatres which can visit GP surgeries by rota to perform major operations in situ, leaving the patient with local post-operative and recuperative care.

Again, the aim is to minimize the trauma and cost of institutional care. It is to take medicine to the patient instead of vice versa. If this were to be nominated as a target worth achieving, we should have little difficulty in producing mobile theatres. We could draw on the experience of field operating theatres used by the armed forces, and the very impressive record they have recently clocked up in dealing with emergency cases.

The aim should be to have such mobile operating theatres available on a routine basis in most parts of the country well within the quarter century. They would pay for themselves by the huge savings they would make possible elsewhere within the NHS budget.

9. One challenge is to develop the technology which will enable quick, cheap, routine monitoring of patients in their homes. In remote areas it is already possible for electronic links to enable distant doctors to conduct examinations of patients. This type of activity could be intensified by the development of new equipment which enabled much more to be done by computer.

Many illnesses can be prevented or made less severe if the incipient signs are detected early. The challenge is to devise equipment which is easy to use and which would enable most of these tests to be done at home. Patients could perform the tests themselves by following on-screen instructions, and the results of analysis could be sent down the line to their general practitioner's surgery.

One way of promoting this kind of research and directing attention to it might be for the government to announce a competition with big prizes for the most successful entry. This is the way in which navigation at sea was finally solved; there was a state competition won by the inventor of the chronometer. In more recent times man powered flight was goaded forward by an international competition prize, eventually won by the Gossamer Condor. Such competitions can



focus interest and attention and get people directing their energies toward the nominated goal.

10. At some point within the next twenty-five years we should aim to have an individual medical computer record for every patient in Britain. The purpose would be to enable information to be accessed rapidly whenever and wherever it were needed. It would contain a full log of the medical history of the patient, with blood and tissue types, allergies, previous medications used. It would provide a full record of all illnesses and treatments. It would have to be available on a nationally accessible database, subject to present ethical rules on confidentiality.

While such a target might seem obvious, it should be borne in mind that many patient records today are contained on small hand-written cards stored in cardboard boxes. The transfer of essential information can be both laborious and time consuming. There should be a national drive to have all of this accessible on computer as soon as possible. The benefits to both patients and doctors will be immediate.

## ENVIRONMENT

1. We should aim by 2020 to have completed a clear-up of all derelict industrial sites in Britain, and made them available for new purposes. The area of damaged or distressed land is very high. In the green belt an estimate made for Channel 4's Diverse Reports put the proportion of "brown" (ie damaged) land as high as 40 percent. This includes rubbish dumps, slag heaps, run-down factory sits, disused gravel pits, and abandoned horticultural gardens.

In the cities are huge derelict or decaying areas which form the legacy of former industries. Some restoration schemes such as those in Glasgow, Liverpool and London's Docklands show what can be done.

It is not always as simplistic as re-greening the areas of rural dereliction and replacing the urban decay by new houses and offices. In some cases it might be more appropriate to replace urban blight by trees and parks, while building new towns and villages on the site of rural desolation.

The point is that both areas represent waste of land, an increasingly precious commodity. We should declare it our aim to have derelict land reclaimed for alternative use. The first stage is to compile a register of all land which can be classified as derelict. After that it will be possible to launch a variety of schemes with different incentives to promote its restoration and use.

The tactic used for enterprise zones might be used again for derelict land. The normal lengthy and time-consuming planning processes might be short circuited for damaged and distressed land in favour of proposals to restore it and put it into useful activity. There might, as with enterprise zones, be a tax holiday for a number of years on the fruits of restoration activity.

2. The target should be to switch over to non-polluting methods of production. This is particularly true in respect of air and water quality. The important point is not to regulate in detail, as bureaucracies are wont to do, the exact processes which will be permitted or banned. It is to set targets, announced well in advance, which are left to business and industry to find appropriate ways of achieving.

By nominating a particular technology the state forecloses ingenious and inventive ways of achieving the targets more cost effectively. By stipulating



particular chimney scrubbers, it prevents research which might have found more efficient ways of cleaning the emission.

A promising approach tried in California nominates an overall permissible pollution level, systematically reducing, and allows the industry to trade permits with each other. This makes clean production worth money, in that the less clean producers have to buy more permits from their cleaner competitors. It has the advantage of securing systematic improvement without instantly making whole industries uneconomic.

3. We should move toward zero pollution from transport and industry in our cities. The targets should converge toward zero emission within cities. This probably means electric or fuel cell vehicles. It probably means that some urban industries must either retool with non polluting processes, or relocate to unpopulated areas.

By the time we are well into the next century we will no longer wish to live ourselves, or to bring our children up, in a climate tainted by noxious and toxic emissions from industry and transport. If we recognize that now and start moving towards it, there will be less upheaval and dislocation if it is suddenly thrust upon us.

We should publish clearly in advance what the targets will be in order that businesses which are about to re-equip, or new firms about to start up, will bear in mind what will eventually be required of them.

4. It should be a national target to raise the proportion of the country which is wooded. This is currently down to less than 5 percent. It could be raised to 65 percent over the course of a quarter of a century. Some of the New England states, although heavily populated and industrialized, are 85 percent wooded. This means a major change in our attitude to the countryside. Where we have tolerated wasteland and the remains of mining operations we could seek to have forests instead. Where we have allowed land to be idle under set-aside rules, we might wish to have trees planted instead.

The privatization of the Forestry Commission will be a major step forward. One of the most poorly managed state operations, its legacy lies in the rows of identikit conifers which disfigure our countryside. A newly privatized forestry will start an aggressive planting policy, just as its counterpart did in New Zealand after it was privatized. Like its overseas counterpart, it will plant natural, varied and balanced woods instead of the mass-produced state variety.

A large proportion of farmland could be given over to tree farming. The acreage needed for food production is declining every year. It is entirely within our grasp to decide whether we want prairie acres covered by exotic crops of lupins or rape-seed grown to attract subsidies, and which require intensive use of fertilizers and pesticides, or whether we would prefer to make trees a more economic alternative.

5. We could make one of our targets the restoration of some of the traditional species which are no longer native to Britain because of the systematic destruction of their habitat. We have already done this, almost entirely by private and voluntary effort, in the case of several species of birds. Now we might wish to target for restoration some of the animal species which have gone. The otter narrowly escaped destruction here; in the coming years we might wish to restore some species which were less fortunate.

The programme of planting of woodlands and forests will generate some of the habitat that was lost. A successful campaign has restored wolves to some American states which had lost them. The basis of success was the generous compensation schemes offered to farmers who lose occasional livestock in hard winters. The wolves have proved very attractive to eco-tourists, bring revenue into the area with



them. With the protection and restoration of the habitat we could, in a quarter of a century, aim to restore wolves to parts of the wild in Britain. Other species including bears and beavers might be restored. Certainly in Yellowstone National Park the bears are reckoned to bring in millions of dollars of tourist revenue.

To set such targets and to motivate private and voluntary effort to achieve them says something about the sort of country which we wish to live in and to pass on to our children. If we wished to make it so, it could be a country which reflected the variety of nature and afforded a home to many species other than our own.

6. It is a remarkable feature of British cities seen from the air to see how small is the proportion of urban trees. Many North American cities, by contrast, are leafy and green. To some extent this is because of the more spacious US style of building, which allows space for leafy avenues. But the proportion of trees is higher even in fairly dense and built-up cities.

We could encourage a major campaign of urban tree planting. Our local authorities could invite businesses to sponsor the planting of whole streets of trees. We could bring urban derelict and waste land into use in this respect, using trees to remove eyesores and create little pockets of countryside inside our towns and cities. If we decided now that we wished to live in towns and cities which had many more trees than at present we could set targets for tree planting and for the proportion of the urban environment given over to them.

The point is, once again, that we can decide to make our habitat what we want it to be, and can motivate people to set about making it so.

7. We should also make it one of our goals to secure litter-free towns and countryside well within the target period. Past campaigns have not succeeded. The causes of littering are complex, and more research needs to be done about what types of incentive and facility militate against the spreading of litter.

It may be that new laws are needed, or that existing laws need to be enforced with tougher penalties. It may be that more education is needed in schools. It may be that some potential litter can be controlled at source. We may need more biodegradable packaging. Strategically placed (and terrorist-proof) receptacles might be part of the answer.

We should approach the problem with a readiness to listen to new thinking and to test new solutions. Given this, it should not be beyond our abilities to have made major strides towards a solution within twenty-five years.

8. The restoration of English wild-flower meadows could feature as one of the targets thought worth attaining. The English meadow provides a habitat for innumerable flowers, plants and insects. Much of it has been destroyed by intensive farming in the countryside and the taste for manicured lawns and gardens in our villages and small towns.

We could aim to restore some of that lost habitat. One way of drawing attention to that aim, and of motivating people to help voluntarily to achieve it, would be to offer national prizes for the best wild-flower meadows and natural gardens. A gentle nudge such as this might be all that were needed to make such gardens and meadows fashionable, and encourage people to attempt to recreate them.

9. By the year 2020 we should have a national genetic centre to propagate domestic varieties of plants and animals. It should act as a storehouse of genetic information on native species, and a source of genetic material to promote the restoration and spread of such varieties.

Native plants, insects and animals have been lost because of the erosion of their habitat. In attempting to restore part of that habitat, it would be useful if there were



an available source of seed material to repopulate with traditional species. A national genetic centre for native species could play such a role. It could be privately funded, and meet part of its overheads by charging for its services. It could be partly financed by charitable contributions.

10. There should be a systematic campaign to recapture some of the civic pride which held sway in Victorian Britain. Part of that could be encouraged by the restoration of the fabric of our cities. It is sad to see magnificently designed and constructed building falling into disrepair and lack of external maintenance.

It should be a priority to instigate urban renewal schemes which will seek to restore, step by step, the fabric of our urban environment. There needs to be an overall vision of what is to be done in each city, what the priorities are, and what timetable can reasonably be attempted. There have to be financial incentives to encourage businesses and local authorities to undertake this task. Indeed, it probably has to be done as a partnership between national and local government and the business community.

## COMMUNICATIONS

1. Our target should be to have Britain as a world leader in communications. Britain should be at the forefront of the technology of communication, of its transmission systems, and of the production of its content. One way to give Britain a place at the front of this advance would be for us to make it a target that this country will have the most advanced system of information transmission by the year 2020.

It should be our target for every home which wants it to have access to dozens of television channels on alternative transmission systems, by terrestrial transmission, cable and satellite. This will mean the pursuit of a fairly liberal and flexible policy. Instead of trying to control and limit access to information and entertainment as British governments have done in the past, and as many other governments do today, we should give the benefit of the doubt to new developments.

It is not up to governments or their worthy advisers to determine how much entertainment is appropriate, or how much advertising the industry can sustain. In all probability governments would take a blinkered view and get it wrong. They would in the process limit the expansion of what ought to be a major industry for Britain.

Britain's lead in mobile telephones could be mirrored in our use of interactive programming and multi-media communication. BT's experimental introduction of programming on demand could help the nation to an early lead. Our telecommunications industry should declare the target, and government should help by minimizing the regulatory and licence requirements which could delay or inhibit it.

2. One of our communications targets should be to develop and install the world's first system of lifetime personal telephone numbers which can be accessed anywhere on the planet. Instead of denoting a home base as it has done hitherto, the new technology will allow the number to designate an instrument which is the portable property of a single user. The technology will allow a call to be received by that user from anywhere in the world, wherever that user might happen to be at the time.

Our aim should be to have Britain leading the world in this development. Government can help by making it easy, by creating an environment favourable to the development and installation of innovative communications technology. We



should allow companies and individuals to take risks, and for some to introduce new ventures that fail. And we should allow the ones who succeed to take fair reward for the risks they have run. Once again, this means a relaxed regulatory and licensing requirement. The aim should be to encourage inventiveness and innovation, not to try to keep it under control.

3. By 2020 we should aim to have in place the technology which allows British viewers to access on demand programmes from anywhere in the world. This should include a mixture of programmes broadcast in real time which British viewers can tune in to, and programmes available on demand from library stores capable of being watched at any time the viewer chooses.

7. In other words the aim should be to create an open international market available to British viewers. If Britain is to be a society which makes its way by looking outward and selling goods and services to the world, it will be beneficial to enable British viewers to see the world in their own homes. Observers have pointed to the beneficial effects on British habits caused by travel abroad and exposure to different standards and different cultures. A similar improvement can be expected if British viewers can be in contact with the world.

One of the technical challenges will be to produce a computer programme capable of translating between languages. Such devices are at the primitive and experimental stages at present, but it is realistic to expect that in twenty-five years time they will be sophisticated and inexpensive, enabling viewers to hear foreign programmes dubbed into their own language.

8. Government should refrain from conspiring with other governments internationally to restrict the access which their citizens have to each other's programmes.

4. Similarly it should be our aim to give British citizen access to world information and communications networks. Britons at home should be able to tap into databases and libraries world-wide. They should be able to communicate at will with people all over the world. It is irrelevant whether the technology uses satellite or cable transmission; it should be accessible by all.

It may well be that our fellow citizens in 2020 will prefer to play complex computer games with residents of other countries they will never meet. They might wish to download computer software across international frontiers. They might wish to explore the resources of the Library of Congress or view the exhibits of the Louvre on their home screens. The point is that regardless of the uses to which they might put it, it should be our aim to make sure they have access to it.

5. One of the technologies waiting to be developed is that which will enable people to customize their own newspapers, and have them delivered electronically into their homes. Under such a system the customer would select which features of a daily paper were on offer. They might choose world news, sport and shopping from the options available on screen. They might even mix and match features from several newspapers. The resultant composite would be sent electronically to their home during the night, and be waiting in paper form for them to read at their breakfast table.

Our inventors and manufacturers should make it their aim to be the first with such technical capability. It will depend to a large extent on the "information highway" which Britain is in a strong position to lead. If Britain were the first to develop such capability, it might well feature among the items which make royalties from intellectual property an increased proportion of our GNP.

6. Britain should also try to set a lead in the development of low cost vision phones. These should be widely available, including portable models. There are some technical advances still needing to be made, but British engineers are among



those leading the progress in this field. Our wide access to multi-media communications will make us the natural place to lead this development. Just as Britain established an early lead in the development and application of cellular phone technology, so we can be among the leaders of the movement to include vision capability.

There will be huge gains to society as well as to the economy of Britain. The technology can be used to make crime more difficult to commit, and to enable those who choose to work more from home still able to enjoy a degree of social interaction with their fellow workers. It is a worthwhile development, and one we should decide to be at the forefront of.

7. Britain should ensure that it is among the leaders in content as well as in the technology of transmission. This means that Britain should be among the top international producers of television programmes, of music videos, of motion pictures, of video games and software, and of any new developments which emerge.

This can be encouraged by sympathetic tax treatment. Productions in these areas have the potential to earn enormous royalties from overseas customers. We should recognize that fact and give tax incentives to encourage production within this country. We should bear in mind that it is becoming increasingly easy for such productions to locate anywhere in the world. One of our advantages will be British access to multi-media communication. We should decide to make our tax climate another, and specifically try to make it attractive for such activities and productions to locate here.

8. In view of the commercial importance which satellites will play in the communications revolution, it would be very much in Britain's interest if a cheap way could be found of launching material into orbit could be found. The British Aerospace HOTOL offered such a possibility several years ago, but it failed to attract sufficient support. There are several technologies which offer Britain a late chance to enter this field, possibly with international partners. There is a suggestion that a modified HOTOL could be launched even more cheaply from the giant Russian Antonov aircraft. There is the possibility that a linear accelerator, in whose early development Britain played a lead role, could be used on a rail catapult to project payloads into low orbit.

We should make it an aim to ensure that these possibilities are at least examined. There should be a competition inviting teams to submit project proposals, with a substantial prize if any are deemed to be viable. At the very minimum, such a competition would catch the national imagination and direct thinking toward the possibility.

## SOCIETY, WORK AND THE FAMILY

1. We should, within twenty-five years have overhauled the unfunded state welfare system and converted it into a fully funded system. Instead of having a fragile claim on the goodwill of future generations, people should build up their own funds, paying into private *Lifetime Personal Accounts* as an alternative to state National Insurance.

These should be handled by fund managers who will put part into capital growth stocks, and offset part into insurance. People should be allowed to transfer to private accounts sufficient to buy them benefits at least as good as the state can offer. The rest would continue to be paid to provide resources for unfunded present beneficiaries. This puts a termination date beyond which the state will have only



minimal residual liabilities. We can do this well before 2020, and should make it a target to do so.

2. The state in twenty-five years time should have a welfare role limited to that of redistribution from those who can afford it to those who cannot. It should be paying into the private funds of those unfortunate enough to be out of work, sick or disabled, and who were not able to build up enough coverage in their personal accounts to cover such contingencies.

In other words, the state's target should be to retreat from the role of universal provision, and take on the more useful role of picking up those members of society who might otherwise fall behind. It should be noted that if Britain has switched to a system based on personal provision backed by funds, it will be immune to the demographic changes which threaten the welfare economies of most of the advanced nations.

3. We should aim to have a system of personal saving and insurance in place which will give the unemployed 80 percent of their salary for at least the first six months of unemployment. Similarly our target should be a pension system which gives people much better basic pensions than those currently promised by the state.

The key is funding. Capital growth from real funds can far outstrip what the state can promise from future taxpayers. Personal funded schemes can give better value and higher benefits than the state can.

4. It should be our aim to give everyone access to relatively low cost child care. If we succeed in making nursery education widely available for 3 and 4 year-olds, we are talking about child care for the under threes.

The Treasury already gives tax relief for employer provided child care. It should extend that to child care funded by the employer. This will allow small firms to offer child care facilities between them by providing tax free vouchers. These vouchers will correspond to the tax-free child care which employees of larger firms already receive.

We should make loans available for parents who wish to form child care groups, paying one to undertake the child care, and leaving the rest to be able to work, at least part time. Such groups can give access to employment to a whole group currently denied it, and many of whom are probably dependent on welfare as a result.

5. One of our goals should be to provide negative income tax for those who earn too little for their personal and family needs, just as we charge income tax for those who earn above that level. The advantage of negative income tax is that it is based on an assessment of needs, and does away with a plethora of benefits controlled by complex and arcane rules.

The problem to be solved with a negative income tax is to operate it in a way which does not create poverty traps. It should always benefit someone if they go out and do extra work. The negative income tax has to be devised so that a person does not instantly lose all entitlement to it the moment they earn above the limit. This can be done in two ways. The first is by creating a deep boundary within which someone who earns enough to take them above the line is allowed to keep a part of their extra earnings, or to retain part of the negative tax on a sliding scale. The second way is to permit the person to retain the benefit for a period of time (perhaps a few months) after their earnings have taken them above the limit.

These are technical and practical problems which we should make it our target to solve. The benefits and savings of a negative income tax are so great that it should be our aim to have one up and running as soon as we can.



6. It is not permissible at present to use pension funds for anything other than the payment of pensions. In fact some people have a need for retirement care later into their retirement, and find it difficult to afford. If we allowed part of their pension fund to be put toward retirement care insurance, we could allow many more people to secure adequate provision for their own long term residential care needs.

Our aim should be to create a situation in which most people are able to undertake such provision during their working lives, and are thus able to take care of their own future needs.

7. We should set higher social standards in the future than we have currently, and declare our intention to live in a society which gives everyone access to a decent standard of living and to adequate shelter. Some of the targets already listed will help to secure this, including a negative income tax and extensive work-related insurance to cover future welfare needs.

The declaration itself would be a worthwhile target, and would focus attention on the most efficient ways of achieving this. On the question of shelter, more action would be needed on the supply side, with converted housing blocks made available for the homeless as an alternative to the very costly bed and breakfast accommodation often provided currently.

We should bear in mind the image which Britain presents to foreign visitors when they see people sleeping in shop doorways and begging on the streets. One advantage of a wide welfare net which guaranteed shelter and a decent standard of living is that there would be no need for rough sleeping and begging.

8. Our aim should be to offer everyone a useful role in society. If people are unemployed in the long term and unable to find work even with all the help they can be given, there should be useful jobs available for them to do. In the past the Treasury objection has been the cost of creating and managing such jobs. The aim should be to encourage the charitable and voluntary sector to use most of the long-term unemployed in return for managing the jobs they do.

There is a great deal of community and environmental work which charities might be prepared to nominate and to supervise, had they access to a free labour force. We should make our target to have work like this available for every long term unemployed person. It is as well to bear in mind that of the three million currently out of work, one million will have jobs within three months, a further million within six months, and half of the remainder within a year. The pool of long term hard core unemployed is smaller than the rotating pool of those temporarily out of work.

## GOVERNMENT

1. Government should be much trimmer and more efficient than it is currently. One of our aims should be to close down several government departments and assign such parts of their work as still needed to be done into other departments.

We should close down the Departments of Agriculture, Employment and Transport, and incorporate the various Law Officers into the Home Office. The result will be to give us a smaller and more efficient cabinet.

Farmers have no special need for a cabinet level minister of their own, any more than auto workers do, or those who work in the tourist trade. It is one type of industry among many others. Employment no longer needs to be separate. The part of its function which tries to create jobs belongs in the Department of Trade and



Industry, while the part dealing with job-seekers assurance and benefits belongs in the Department of Social Security.

Transport should be similarly seen as another industry. After the privatization of British Rail and London Underground, the Department's job will have shrunk to little more than the regulation of various modes of transport and the provision of roads. The latter should be privatized under the aegis of the Department of the Environment, and the former could be assigned to the DTI.

The Law Officers could happily be integrated as sub-departments of the Home Office. It would give us more chance of a sensibly integrated system of law and justice.

2. Privatization and out-sourcing should dramatically reduce the need for a permanent civil service staff. Most of them should be in private firms working under contract to provide government services, and free to do so in the most efficient way, as well as to undertake work for other private firms.

Our target should be a core civil service of 20,000 persons, with the rest devolved into private firms. Much of the actual privatization should be done by management led buyouts. Many of the Next Steps Agencies are obvious candidates for this treatment. It should be our goal to accelerate this process.

3. We should allow communities to decide if they wish to choose local and private services as alternatives to those provided nationally and publicly. This involves a recognition that we no longer live in a mass society or a mass economy, but one in which communities have different needs.

In some cases communities in certain areas might be able to secure a more appropriate and more personal service if they obtain it locally from the private sector. We should seek to create opportunities at every turn for communities to take such decisions locally, opting out of as many national services as we can make possible, and using the finance instead to purchase more apposite services locally.

The aim is to make government *one* source of services, instead of the only source. If government can market test and out-source some of its work, local communities should also be given the opportunity to do so.

4. It may be appropriate for some towns to incorporate, making their residents shareholders in a domestic version of Spain's Mondragon method. The local inhabitants of such towns would take the decision by referendum, turning the town in effect into a business. The democratic rights and protections available to shareholders are already well in excess of those enjoyed by local government electors, so there would be no loss of representative rights or of accountability.

Given the more varied nature of our communities, it might well be appropriate to include this option among the other types of local community which are available. Local loyalties and pride might well be tighter if residents shared with each other the ownership of their community and its assets, and if these were by law to be operated in the interests of local residents in their capacity as share-holders.

Such an option might well help to depoliticize local politics, at least from the stranglehold which national parties have over them, and might lead to a much livelier interest in local issues. As the community prospered, so would its residents.

5. There is a strong case for offering an alternative to PAYE, particularly for the small firms who bear so heavily the labour of its calculation and collection. One solution could be to offer the alternative of self assessment and payment by direct debit to individual employees.



Self assessment is the norm in the United States, where a tax base five times as large as ours is collected with the same number of officers. US citizens routinely avail themselves of the services of professional tax helpers, and the US Internal Revenue Service uses random audits to police the system.

One of our targets to have achieved long before 2020 is an alternative method of tax collection to PAYE. The combination of self assessment and direct debit might offer a system no less efficient to the Treasury, but much friendlier to the individual and the small firm. The Treasury have often postponed taking such a step; we should make it a priority.

6. In view of the rising tide of legislation which affects us every year, it should be a target of the next quarter century to clear away such legislation as is inappropriate or no longer necessary. The aim should be to trawl through the statute book on a regular basis to retire legislation no longer relevant, or now excessively onerous, to modern conditions.

As a corollary, a secondary aim should be to attach "sunset" dates on current and new legislation, leading to an automatic lapse if it is not renewed. The principle of "sunset" legislation is not new; it has a role to play in preventing government bodies and committees simply renewing themselves out of habit, and without regard for the continued utility of doing so. It would be a worthwhile aim to make regular and institutional use of it in Britain.

7. A similar aim already started by government is the systematic removal of much of the regulation which clutters and impedes economic and personal activity. While the government has made a modest start, we should declare our intention to make a thorough Spring clean well before the next century is two decades old.

Our target should be to keep regulation to the minimum, and to have it *result-driven* instead of *process-driven*. This means that it should stipulate the end to be achieved instead of the detailed means which have to be used to achieve it.

8. We should aim to correct an imbalance in religious representation in the House of Lords. As an inheritance of the established church in England, we have reserved places monopolized by Anglican bishops. No representation is available to other faiths except by chance, not even to our other established church, the Church of Scotland.

Our aim should be to secure a reform which recognizes that Britain is a society of many faiths, and which allocates the seats for ecclesiastical representatives between the faiths based on the approximate number of adherents to each. This would mean seats for representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and for those of the Church of Scotland. It would perhaps mean some seats for representatives of churches popular with minority communities.

It would mean the seats presently occupied by Anglican bishops alone would be shared out between other faiths as well, and as such would constitute a small but useful correction.